

The LOVE of GOD.

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A
S E R M O N

Preached at the FUNERAL of
Mr. SAMUEL HUNTER, jun.
Mariner, *in Liverpool:*

Who departed this Life the 25th Day of
JANUARY, 1758;

In the 34th Year of his AGE.

By *JOHN JOHNSON.* *K*

*Precious in the Sight of the LORD, is the
Death of his Saints.* PSAL. cxvi. 15.



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II. THESSALONIANS iii. 5.

And the Lord direct your Hearts into the Love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

THE Words before us contain a fervent Prayer, made by the Apostle *Paul* for the believing *Thessalonians*: To whom he had been recommending divers rich and precious Truths of the Gospel of Christ; and giving divers seasonable Admonitions: But well knowing, that the Success of all Instructions and Admonitions depends on the Blessing of the God of all Grace; he presents his Petition to the Lord, to *direct their Hearts*. And that, not to direct them into any inferior Enjoyment; but into the most excellent and glorious Blessing, that is possible to be enjoyed by Man or Angel; even *The Love of God*. This is the highest Manifestation that God can make of himself: The brightest Display of his Perfection: The opening of his eternal Bosom; wherein dwells, and from whence shines forth, the boundless Grace of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The same Apostle (in his most ardent Address to God the Father, for the *Ephesians*) calls it, *The Love of Christ, which passeth Knowledge.* (a) The last Part of the Petition is, to direct their Hearts

into the patient waiting for Christ. Which may be understood, as including all kinds of waiting for Christ, which the Christian may be exercised in, during Life; but chiefly must relate to his second Coming. As it is elsewhere expressed, *And to wait for his Son from Heaven.* (b) And in this Part of the Request, he does not ask for a Blessing of a different kind; but that their Hearts might be directed in a right Way, to wait for the full Enjoyment of that infinite eternal Love; which is an unfathomable Ocean, having neither Bank nor Bottom, Shore nor Bound; and whose Fountains shall be more abundantly broken up at the second Coming of Christ: *When he shall come to be glorified in his Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.* (c) For all the Kinds and Degrees of Blessedness, to which the Saints shall arrive in this World, or the World to come; are but so many glorious Manifestations, and plenteous Communications of the Love of God. Therefore, to be divinely directed into the Love of God, is the highest Felicity that is possible to any Creature, in Time or Eternity.

The solid Joy and Satisfaction which our dear Brother was favoured with (when living among us) in the Views of the Love of God, and his Interest therein; is the Reason why I chose this Subject upon this Occasion. Tho' I am very sensible (since he is deceased) I can speak to him no more: Nor can any Thing done or spoken amongst us, contribute to him, or affect him in any wise. But my Concern is

(a) Eph. iii. 19. (b) I. Thes. i. 10. (c) II. Thes. i. 10.

for you that are living. That, if it be the good Pleasure of the Lord, to direct your Hearts into the same Love; you may be blessed with the same Enjoyments. I was intimately acquainted with my dear Friend, from the first when the Lord was pleased to call him by his Grace, and reveal the Son of his Love in his Soul. At which Time his Heart was filled with the Love of God, and it was the delightful Subject of his Conversation: And it has continued to be his Comfort and Stay, upon which he fed, and found sweet Refreshment; in which he dwelt, and found fixed Rest; for a number of Years. And it proved durable to the last: A strong Support under the Assaults of the last Enemy: An invincible Defence against the Terrors of Death: A Light by which he was not afraid to walk through the Darkness. For the Hope and Joy of entering into the more immediate Presence of him whom his Soul loved, dissipated all the Gloom, and gave Death a desirable Aspect; or rather, a Prospect of the Glory of him that dwells beyond the Shades, absorbed all the interposing Clouds.—That this was the Case in his last Sickness, has been confirmed to me by divers Hints from Persons that were with him, at such Intervals, when the Malignancy of the Disorder would permit him to express his Mind. Beside what I heard from him myself, the last Time I found him capable of Conversation: When he was expressing the Satisfaction, the Comfort, Enlargement, and strong Consolation which his Soul felt, and tasted; in the infinite, unchanging, and everlasting Love of God.

Now, that our Hearts may be directed into the same transcendent Love; and, if the Holy

Ghost is pleased to give a Blessing, that we may be brought to the same Spiritual Consolation; I shall consider the following Particulars.

First, The Nature, or some of the Properties of the Love of God.

Secondly, Some of the Productions of the Love of God.

Thirdly, The Way whereby the Lord directs the Hearts of his People into the Love of God.

Fourthly, Some of the Effects of the Love of God, in them whose Hearts are directed into it. Which will bring me to consider the patient waiting for Christ.

I begin with shewing the Nature, or pointing out some of the properties of the Love of God.

1. It is essential Love. I do not mean, meerly, that Love has a Being; but that Love is the Being of God; or essential to himself. As saith the Apostle *John*; *God IS Love*. He doth not say, *God hath Love*, or, *God doth Love*, but, *God IS Love*. The divine Essence is Love: Or, Love is the essential Attribute of Jehovah; inseparable from the divine Nature: And without which, the Godhead never did, or possibly can exist. And therefore the Apostle repeats the Word: *God IS Love; and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. (d)* If Love in God was a Quality derived from any other Being; God would not be the original Source of all Good: If it was a Disposition produced, or sprung up at some certain Period, and not coeval with his Existence; God would not be immutable: And if it was a Passion ex-

(d) I. John iv. 8, 16.

cited by any thing seen in, or done by any Creature; God would not be impassible: And such a Being is not God.—The Scripture expressly calls the Most High, *The God of Love*; (e) and abundantly ascribes all Love to him alone; both as it is in himself, as it abounds towards his People, and as it produces Love in their Hearts: It still bears this Character, *The Love of God*. Grace is no other than the Outgoings of Love: Or, it is Love in its rich Provision, illustrious Manifestation, and effectual Application. And he is not only called, *The God of all Grace*; (f) but all Grace is perpetually ascribed to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: And in whatever Form it appears, it is still called, *The Grace of God*. Every good Gift proceeds from Love: And nothing can produce an Effect more excellent than it self: But the Gift which God bestows upon his Elect, is himself: For he often repeats the Promise, *I will be their God*. (g) And when he makes Promise to his People, of the rich Blessings of his Love; he assures them, that it is his very Essence that stands engaged; in these emphatical Expressions; *With my whole Heart, and with my whole Soul*. (h) Therefore the Love of God is absolutely sovereign, independent, and infinitely perfect; having neither Beginning nor End; nor can be subject to any Change, or Fluctuation: As it is nothing less than the eternal *I AM*.

2. The Love of God is eternally fixed, upon an immutable Object, with infinite Delight.

(e) II. Corin. xiii. 11. (f) I. Pet. v. 10. (g) Gen. xvii. 8. Rev. xxi. 7. (h) Jer. xxxii. 41.

Love does not exist without its Object; nor can be prior thereto, or of longer Continuance. Love and its Object are indivisible Correlatives; and must perfectly coincide; both in Similarity and Duration. Love cannot possibly extend farther than it apprehends Desirableness, or finds Suitableness in the Object beloved. Therefore, the sole and universal Centre of God's infinite Love, and eternal Delight; where his Soul resteth with invariable Pleasure and Satisfaction; is, *Christ Jesus the Lord.---The only begotten Son, which is in the Bosom of the Father.* (i) For Christ is very God-Man. *God was manifest in the Flesh.* (k)

And as he is the Essence of God, all the divine Perfections dwell in him: And as he is manifest in our Nature, all the divine Attributes shine forth in him. *Who being the Brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person:* (l) He therefore is, the alone Object of divine Complacency; where the Love of God terminates, with ultimate Joy. As God the Father (over and again) testifies; *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* (m) And points him out, as the superlative Desire of his Heart: *Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my Soul delighteth.* (n) And both *John the Baptist*, and the Lord Jesus himself, give this Testimony; *The Father loveth the Son.* (o) And this glorious Pattern of ample Perfection, *Immanuel*, stood compleat in the Godhead from all Eternity. For tho' the

(i) John i. 18. (k) I. Tim. iii. 16. (l) Heb. i. 3.
 (m) Mat. iii. 17. xvii. 5. (n) Isai. xlii. 1. (o) Joh.
 iii. 35. v. 20.

human Nature was not brought forth into actual Existence, or open Manifestation, for Men to behold his Glory, until the Fulness of Time; yet, he really did subsist (as present) in the divine Mind; and never was absent from his Sight. For he who is the Wisdom of God, expressly declares; *The Lord possessed me in the Beginning of his Way, before his Works of old.*——*Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: And I was daily his Delight, rejoicing always before him.* (p) This was not from some certain Period of Creation: For it was before any of the Works of God; absolutely from Eternity; when no created Being had any Existence, but in the divine Counsel. Nor does it respect him in his Godhead, exclusive of his Manhood; for it is Christ, the *Anointed*, who is called, *The Wisdom of God.* (q) But the divine Nature (abstractedly considered) never was anointed. And it was the Man *Jesus*, who said to his Father, *For thou lovedst me before the Foundation of the World.* (r)

3. The Love of God, having its full Rest in Christ, is extensive to all the Members of his Body: For as all that is God, centers in Christ; so all that is in Christ, centers in the Love of God. God's Elect, in themselves considered, as Creatures; have nothing to recommend them to his Acceptance: But being chosen in Christ, they stand in the Relation of a Wife, or in the Relation of Sons and Daughters; and appear before God in the ample Perfection of the Son of his Love. As a Man who has an only Son, the

(p) Prov. viii. 22, 30. (q) I. Cor. i. 24. (r) John xvii. 24.

highest Object of his Affection, takes Delight in his Son's Family; his Son's Wife, and Children, are all esteemed, and loved as his own Children: But this Love does not proceed from any personal Excellencies in them; but from their Relation to his first-born. He delights to see every amiable Quality in them, and uses every proper Means to produce it. This is the Effect; not the Cause of his Love. His Love to his Son is the alone Fountain, from whence his Love to the Family springs. So, the Love of God to his People flows entirely thro' Christ Jesus. He takes Delight to see them holy; and graciously makes them so. But this is the Effect of his Love; and not the Cause. For the Foundation of his Love to them, is his Love to his own Son; which extends itself to every Individual of his Children; and they are loved with the very same Love as the first-born is. This is a Truth acknowledged by Jesus Christ, to his Father; *Thou—hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.* And he shews himself well pleased and delighted therein; *I have declared unto them thy Name, and will declare it: That the Love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them.* (s) And he tells his Disciples, *The Father himself loveth you.* (t) And that we may understand, that the Love of the Father and the Love of the Son is the very same, he says, *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you.* (u) The Apostle Paul clearly saw, that the Love

(s) John xvii. 23, 26. (t) John xvi. 27. (u) John xv. 9.

of God proceeds to his People, alone in Christ; when magnifying the rich Blessings of Grace, from the Father, and the Son, he makes this Acknowledgement; *To the Praise of the Glory of his Grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.* (w) And again, he joins the Love of the Father and the Son, in the Gifts of Grace; *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, which hath loved us, and given us everlasting Consolation, and good Hope through Grace.* (x) And the Apostle John admires the Freeness, Extensiveness, and Sovereignty of adopting Love; *Behold what Manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God.*-----*Herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us.* (y)

4. The Love of God is superlative Love; of the highest Kind, beyond all Measure and Degree. For as it is truly divine, it must be absolutely infinite; and cannot be circumscribed in any Bounds. Its Height cannot possibly be ascended, its Depth founded, nor its Length and Breadth described by any created Being. For Sin has abounded to the utmost Extent of the Creation: *But where Sin abounded, Grace did much more abound.* (z) And where the Wretchedness and Misery of a State of Sin is described, in the most astonishing Light; Salvation is ascribed to the Greatness of the Love of God: *But God who is rich in Mercy for his great Love where-with he loved us.* Which is also called, *The*

(w) Eph. i. 6. (x) II. Thes. ii. 16. (y) I. John iii. 1. iv. 10. (z) Rom. v. 20.

exceeding Riches of his Grace.—*The unsearchable Riches of Christ.* (a) And again, *The Riches of his Glory:* And, *The Riches of the Glory of this Mystery.* (b) And that the Love of God is of a much more stupendous Nature, than any Thing that can possibly be found in any Creature; fully appears, in comparing the Words of Christ with the Words of *Paul*: The former tells us, *Greater Love hath no Man than this, That a Man lay down his Life for his Friends.* (c) The latter esteems such Love to Friends exceeding rare to be found; yet shews how far the Love of God has exceeded: *But God commendeth his Love towards us, in that while we were yet Sinners, Christ died for us.*—*When we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son.* (d) Yea, the Love manifested in Christ, in that he gave himself for us, laid down his Life for the Sheep, and purchased his Church with his own Blood; is a full Demonstration, that it is beyond the Line of any created Being: And therefore the Apostle *John* makes this Remark upon it; *Hereby perceive we the Love of God, because he laid down his Life for us.* (e)

5. The Love of God is unextinguishable. As the Holy Ghost testifies: *Many Waters cannot quench Love, neither can the Floods drown it.* (f) But in a strict Sense, this can only be true, of the Love of God. For the Love of Creatures, however strong it be, is not

(a) Eph. ii. 1—7. iii. 8. (b) Rom. ix. 23. Col. i. 27.

(c) John xv. 13. (d) Rom. v. 8, 10. (e) I. John iii. 16.

(f) Cant. viii. 7.

unquenchable: But the Love of God is absolutely so.—The Love of Creatures may be quenched by Sights, Insults, and Provocations from the beloved Object: But the Love of God is Proof against all the Unkindness that his People can be guilty of. For when their Ingratitude was so great, that he says, *Thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob, but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.*—*Thou hast made me to serve with thy Sins, thou hast wearied me with thine Iniquities:* His Love and Grace immediately overflows; *I, even I am he that blotteth out thy Transgressions for mine own Sake, and will not remember thy Sins.* (g) And when their Rebellion was so high, that the Lord complains; *My People have forgotten me Days without Number.*—*Thou hast played the Harlot with many Lovers.*—*Thou hast spoken and done evil Things as thou couldest:* His Love flames above all, in the most endearing Invitations; *Yet return again to me, saith the LORD.*—*Wilt thou not from this Time cry unto me, My Father?*—*Turn, O backsliding Children, saith the LORD, for I am married unto you.* (h) Yea, when their Iniquity had risen to an Aggravation, equal to that of Sodom; the Fervour of his Love never abates: *Nevertheless I will remember my Covenant with thee in the Days of thy Youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting Covenant, &c.* (i) —The Love of Creatures may be asswaged, and at last extinguished, by the Difficulties which may attend the Manifestation thereof: When there can be no

(g) Isai. xliii. 22, 24, 25. (h) Jer. ii. 32. iii. 1, 4, 5, 14.
(i) Ezek. xvi. 60.

Enjoyment of the Object, but through the severest Hardships, and deepest Sufferings; the Love of a Creature cannot endure. But the Love of Christ was unmoveable, through the deepest Extremities. His Sufferings for his Church, were not only the most exquisite, but the most extensive: For he not only complains, *My Heart is like Wax, it is melted in the midst of my Bowels*: But he adds, *Thou hast brought me into the Dust of Death.*(k) He was not only, *Wounded for our Transgressions, bruised for our Iniquities*: But, *He was cut off out of the Land of the Living.*—*It pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to Grief*: And this to the very utmost; *He hath poured out his Soul unto Death.*(l) Yet, all was performed with the greatest Chearfulness, without the least Regret: *I lay down my Life for the Sheep.*—*No Man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself.*(m)

6. The Love of God is inseparable from its Objects. Be Creatures ever so affectionate, their Love may be intercepted; by Distance of Time, or Place; by Misrepresentations, or false Accusations; by Interest, or Disappointments; by Changes in the beloved Object, or other Objects intervening. &c. But the Love of God is immutable; nor can it possibly know a Change: *Can a Woman forget her sucking Child, that she should not have Compassion on the Son of her Womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.*(n) His Love was not misguided, or unwarily placed; so as

(k) Psal. xxii. 14, 15. (l) Isai. liii. 5, 8, 10, 12. (m) Joh. x. 15, 18. (n) Isai. xlix. 15.

some Unworthiness in the Object, unexpectedly discovered, should afterwards cause it to recede: For he says, *I knew that thou wouldst deal very treacherously*: Yet expresses Abundance of loving Kindness; for which he gives this Reason; *For mine own Sake, even for mine own Sake will I do it.* (o) And by the invariable Constancy of his Love, he makes his People know that it is himself: *And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have wrought with you for my Name's Sake, not according to your wicked Ways, nor according to your corrupt Doings, O ye House of Israel, saith the LORD GOD.* (p) Nor does the Love of God want Stability and Fortitude, to maintain its Ground against all the Power and Policy of the Enemy: For Jesus testifies of his Sheep, *I give unto them eternal Life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my Hand. My Father which gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's Hand.* (q) And again, *Upon this Rock I will build my Church; and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.* (r) And hence the Apostle makes this bold Challenge, *Who shall separate us from the Love of Christ?* And gathers this indubitable Persuasion, *That neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor Things present, nor Things to come, nor Height, nor Depth, nor any other Creature, shall be able to separate us from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* (s)

(o) Isai. xlviii. 8, 11. (p) Ezek. xx. 44. (q) Joh. x. 28, 29. (r) Mat. xvi. 18. (s) Rom. viii. 35, 38, 39.

7. The Love of God is everlasting: For his Love is himself, and he is, *The everlasting God.* (t) And forasmuch as, *Love is God*; the same with the divine Essence; it must be of eternal Duration: *For in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting Strength.* (u) And the Love of God must be the same in Continuance, with the primary beloved Object, in whom it centers, *Jesus Christ the same Yesterday, and To-day, and for ever.* (w) By whatever Name, or Character, God is pleased to make himself known to his People; he is their God, and they are the Children of his Love, considered in that very Capacity: And he speaks to *Israel* under this Character, *The eternal God is thy Refuge, and underneath are the everlasting Arms.* (x) Therefore his Love is absolutely eternal.—That it is from Eternity, without Beginning, his Word is plain: *The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting Love: therefore with loving Kindness have I drawn thee.* (y) And concerning the Messiah (who never went forth but in the Love of God to his Chosen) it is said, *Whose Goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.* (z) And *Moses* looks back to the Eternity of God, to shew the antient Residence of the Church, in the Bosom of their Father: *LORD, thou hast been our Dwelling Place in all Generations. Before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the Earth and the World: Even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.* (a)

(t) Gen. xxi. 33. (u) Isai. xxvi. 4. (w) Heb. xiii. 8.
 (x) Deut. xxxiii. 27. (y) Jer. xxxi. 3. (z) Mich. v. 2.
 (a) Psal. xc. 1, 2.

Upon this ancient Love, *David* pleads with God: *Remember, O LORD, thy tender Mercies, and thy loving Kindnesses: For they have been ever of old.* (b) And that it is to Eternity, or without End, his Word assures us: *With everlasting Kindness will I have Mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.---For the Mountains shall depart, and the Hills be removed, but my Kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the Covenant of my Peace be removed, saith the LORD, that hath Mercy on thee.* (c) And of the Lord, *Immanuel*, it is said, *Having loved his own which were in the World, he loved them unto the End.* (d)

In the second Place, I come to point out some of the Productions of the Love of God.

1. It is the original Source, Ground, and Center of all God's eternal Counsels, Purposes, Promises, and Ordinations of Grace; in Behalf of his Church, thro' Christ Jesus. The eternal Plan of Grace and Glory, complete in the infinite Comprehension of the divine Mind, was no other than the going forth of the Love of God in Christ, to his Church. As it is fully expressed, in the Relation which (Christ) the Wisdom of God gives of himself, before the World. *Rejoicing in the habitable Part of his Earth, and my Delights were with the Sons of Men.* (e) The Scripture very largely ascribes all the Blessings of Salvation and everlasting Life, which are exhibited in Time; to God's Foreknowledge, Election, Predestination, and Gift given, before the World was: Which plainly appear to pro-

(b) Psal. xxv. 6. (c) Isai. liv. 8. 10. (d) John xiii. 1.

(e) Prov. viii. 31.

ceed from no other Fountain, but God himself, which is Love. And hence we thus read, *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the Image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many Brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: And whom he called, them he also justified: And whom he justified, them he also glorified.* (f)---That he might make known the Riches of his Glory on the Vessels of Mercy, which he had afore prepared unto Glory. (g) ---We speak the Wisdom of God in a Mystery, even the hidden Wisdom which God ordained before the World unto our Glory. (h)---According as he hath chosen us in him, before the Foundation of the World, that we should be holy, and without Blame before him in Love: Having predestinated us unto the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good Pleasure of his Will.---In whom also we have obtained an Inheritance, being predestinated according to the Purpose of him who worketh all Things after the Counsel of his own Will. (i) ---To make all Men see, what is the Fellowship of the Mystery, which from the Beginning of the World hath been hid in God, who created all Things by Jesus Christ.---According to the eternal Purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. (k) ---Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy Calling, not according to our Works, but according to his own Purpose and Grace which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the World began. (l)---In Hope of eternal Life, which God that cannot lie,

(f) Rom. viii. 29, 30. (g) Rom. ix. 23. (h) 1 Cor. ii. 7.
 (i) Eph. i. 4, 5, 11. (k) Eph. iii. 9, 11. (l) 2 Tim. i. 9.

*promised before the World began. (m)---Elect according to the Foreknowledge of God the Father, through Sanctification of the Spirit unto Obedience, and sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus Christ.---Who verily was fore-ordained before the Foundation of the World, but was manifest in these last Times for you. (n)---These Texts, with a Cloud of other Witnesses, in the Scriptures, do undeniably evince this precious Truth: That the Love of God in Christ is the very Spring, Life, and Essence of his eternal Counsel of Grace; and that his Purpose of Grace in his beloved Son, prior to the Creation, is the Foundation, and divine Origin of all the Salvation, Life, Felicity, and Glory, that his Children shall enjoy in Time or Eternity. Upon this Foundation, the Gospel of Grace is now preached unto us: *The Works were finished from the Foundation of the World. (o)* And upon the very same Ground, the Saints shall enter the Kingdom of Glory at the last Day: *Then shall the King say unto them on his right Hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World. (p)**

2. In Consequence of the superlative Love of God, Christ Jesus was given to us: The greatest Gift in Heaven or Earth: God's own Image and Glory; his first, and only begotten Son: *For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the Government shall be upon his Shoulder: and his Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Fa-*

(m) Tit. i. 2.

(n) 1 Pet. i. 2, 20.

(o) Heb. iv. 3.

(p) Mat. xxv. 34.

ther, the Prince of Peace. (q) And Jesus gives this Reason why he was given to us; For God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life. (r) And John gives the same Reason: In this was manifested the Love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him. (s) He that is Heir of all Things is given to the Church in Marriage Union, to be the Husband, and Head of the Body; and in this Relation he stands, in all his Fulness, and in all his Glory: And he is before all Things, and by him all Things consist. And he is the Head of the Body, the Church. (t)---And hath put all Things under his Feet, and gave him to be the Head over all Things to the Church, which is his Body, the Fulness of him that filleth all in all.---For the Husband is the Head of the Wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church: and he is the Saviour of the Body. (u) He is given as a Covenant: The Mediator, Surety, and Performer of all Things contained in the everlasting Covenant, for the Glory of God, and the eternal Felicity of his People: I the LORD have called thee in Righteousness, and will hold thine Hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a Covenant of the People, for a Light of the Gentiles. (w)---And I will preserve thee, and give thee for a Covenant of the People, to establish the Earth, to cause to inherit the desolate Heritages. (x)

(q) Isai. ix. 6. (r) John iii. 16. (s) 1 John iv. 9.
 (t) Col. i. 17, 18. (u) Eph. i. 22, 23. v. 23. (w) Isai.
 xlii. 6. (x) Isai. xlix. 8.

He is God's Salvation, given to be the Salvation of his chosen; and hence *Zacharias* rejoiced in the Lord, saying, *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his People, and hath raised up an Horn of Salvation for us, in the House of his Servant David.* (y) And he is given to be eternal Life to all his Members: *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting Life.* (z)—*And this is the Record, that God hath given to us eternal Life; and this Life is in his Son.* (a) Yea, Christ is given in all his Fulness and Perfection; all the Excellency and Blessedness that dwells in him is the Gift of the Father's Love to his Church: *For it pleased the Father, that in him should all Fulness dwell.* (b)—*And the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us—full of Grace and Truth.—And of his Fulness have all we received, and Grace for Grace.* (c)

3. The Love of God was the Cause of his giving the Life of his Son; and of the Son giving his Life a Ransom for us. It was not sufficient to give him in the nearest Relation, and in the infinite Riches of Grace and Glory; but, for our Sins, he delivered him to Death: *To put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself.* (d) This is Love, such as cannot be in any but Jehovah himself; to take our Sins and our Sorrows, and lay them on the Darling of his Bosom; and cause him to suffer the most intense Agonies, that we might escape deserved Vengeance. Yet, the most High God hath thus commended his

(y) Luke i. 68, 69. (z) John iii. 36. (a) I. John, v. 11.

(b) Col. i. 19. (c) Joh. i. 14, 16. (d) Heb. ix. 26.

Love to us : *All we like Sheep have gone astray : we have turned every one to his own Way, and the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all.* (e) — *For he hath made him to be Sin for us, who knew no Sin ; that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him.* (f) — *Who was delivered for our Offences, and was raised again for our Justification.* (g) God imputed to him our Sins, and laid on him our Iniquities ; he delivered him into the Hand of vindictive Justice, and saw Judgment executed upon him : *Awake, O Sword, against my Shepherd, and against the Man that is my Fellow, saith the LORD of Hosts : smite the Shepherd, and the Sheep shall be scattered : and I will turn my Hand upon the little Ones.* (h) Thus Christ was consigned to Punishment, and his Children scattered from the Danger, that the Hand of God might gather them in Mercy. And this was no fictitious Delivery and Punishment ; for the Sentence was irreversibile, and the Anguish which he suffered was real : The Burning Wrath was so fierce as to agonize the Soul of the Prince of Life, and cause him to sweat Drops of Blood. Nor was there any other Way of Redemption : For since the immutable Law of God requires the Life of the Sinner, and Christ (in a Law Sense) was made Sin in their Stead, it was not possible for him to make Satisfaction, without suffering the same Punishment, and laying down his Life. — And that he did actually suffer the just Desert of Sin, in a

(e) Isa. liii. 6. (f) II. Cor. v. 21. (g) Rom. iv. 25.
 (h) Zech. xiii. 7.

strict and proper Sense, the Scriptures do clearly manifest, and substantially verify: *Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us. (i)*—*Who his own self bare our Sins in his own Body on the Tree. (k)*—*For Christ hath once suffered for Sins, the Just for the Unjust, that he might bring us to God. (l)*—This is such an incontestable Proof of the Greatness, Freeness, and Immutability of the Love of God, that from hence the Apostle takes Liberty to conclude upon its being absolutely unlimited: *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all Things. (m)*

4. God, in the inconceivable Riches of his Love, gives his holy Spirit to his Children. This is nothing inferior to the Gift of his Son; for the Holy Ghost is very God. *There are three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are One. (n)* The Lord Jesus argues the Certainty of this divine Gift, upon the Strength of divine paternal Love: *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good Gifts unto your Children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him. (o)* Paul asserts this Gift to be given in consequence of the filial Relation of God's Elect: *Because ye are Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts, crying, Abba, Father. (p)* And, that God should take his Residence in his Church, and pitch upon her

(i) Gal. iii. 13. (k) I. Pet. ii. 24. (l) I. Pet. iii. 18.

(m) Rom. viii. 32. (n) I. Joh. v. 7. (o) Luk. xi. 13.

(p) Gal. iv. 6.

as the Habitation of his eternal Delight, is a Demonstration of the highest Love: *For the LORD hath chosen Zion: he hath desired it for his Habitation. This is my Rest for ever: here will I dwell, for I have desired it.* (q) *Thou hast received Gifts for Men; yea, for the Rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them.* (r)—*Even the Spirit of Truth, whom the World cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.* (s)—*Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* (t) It is by him alone that we receive all spiritual Blessings; that we experience the Love of God in our Hearts; and enjoy Communion with the Father and the Son. For no heavenly Blessing, or Gift of Grace, can enrich our Souls, but by the special Influence of the Holy Ghost. As it is written, *No Man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.* (u) And Christ, the Fountain of all Blessings, saith, *He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All Things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* (w) By the powerful Operation of the Spirit of Holiness, Souls are born of God: Christ dwells vitally in their Hearts by Faith; and he who is the Life, becomes Life in them: *Not by Works of Righteousness which we have done, but according to his Mercy he saved us by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*

(q) Psal. cxxxii. 13, 14. (r) Psal. lxxviii. 18. (s) Joh. xiv. 17. (t) I. Cor. iii. 16. (u) I. Cor. xii. 3. (w) Joh. xvi. 14, 15.

which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour. (x)—So is every one that is born of the Spirit. (y)—And thus Paul prayed for the Ephesians, That he would grant you according to the Riches of his Glory, to be strengthened with Might, by his Spirit in the inner Man; that Christ may dwell in your Hearts by Faith (z) By his gracious Communications, the Saints have their Minds enlarged in divine Things, enriched with spiritual Blessings, composed in sacred Peace, and exhilarated with heavenly Joy: I will pour Water upon him that is thirsty, and Floods upon the dry Ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy Seed, and my Blessing upon thine Offspring. (a)—He that believeth on me as the Scripture hath said, out of his Belly shall flow Rivers of living Waters. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive. (b)—For the Kingdom of God is—Righteousness and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost. (c) By his illuminating Influence their Hearts are opened, to receive, understand, and judiciously to distinguish divine Truths; whereby they are established in Faith, grounded and settled in the precious Doctrines of the everlasting Gospel: The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my Name, he shall teach you all Things, and bring all Things to your Remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (d)—Which Things also we speak, not in the Words which Man's Wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual Things with spiritual. (e) By him they are seal-

(x) Tit. iii. 5, 6. (y) Joh. iii. 8. (z) Eph. iii. 16, 17.

(a) Isa. xlv. 3. (b) Joh. vii. 38, 39. (c) Rom. xiv. 17.

(d) Joh. xiv. 26. (e) I. Cor. ii. 13.

ed; and enjoy the full and clear Testimony of their Adoption: *Ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. (f)*—He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God: who hath also sealed us, and given the Earnest of the Spirit in our Hearts. (g)—In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of Promise. (h) And by the Holy Ghost they enjoy strong Consolation, rejoicing in Hope of Christ's second Coming: *Looking for that blessed Hope, and the glorious Appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ. (i)*—He that hath wrought us for the self-same Thing, is God, who also hath given unto us the Earnest of the Spirit. (k)—Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the Day of Redemption. (l)—For we through the Spirit wait for the Hope of Righteousness by Faith. (m) Having such Consolation, such a Seal, and such a blessed Hope; they are not afraid of the Appearance of Death; for Jesus is their Life: They can, with steady Mind, resigned Will, and rejoicing Heart, apply to themselves that well-digested Sentence of sacred Experience: *I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that Day. (n)*—This was the Stay and Confidence of my dear Brother, when living. He was, by the divine Comforter, directed into the Love of the Father, and the Son. And finding Christ to be his Life; his Soul illuminated into the Mysteries

(f) Rom. viii. 15. (g) II. Cor. i. 21, 22. (h) Eph. i. 13. (i) Tit. ii. 13. (k) II. Cor. v. 5. (l) Eph. iv. 30. (m) Gal. v. 5. (n) II. Tim. i. 12.

of heavenly Grace; his Heart established in evangelical Truths; blessed with the Enjoyment of spiritual Union with Christ; and full Assurance of Hope; which, to his strong Consolation, he found, *As an Anchor of the Soul, both sure and stedfast*; because it entered, *Into that within the Vail*: (o) He therefore dreaded not any Surge or Billow; he apprehended not any Storm or Tempest, which the Fury of Hell might raise, to make Death appear the King of Terrors. His Mind was serene, his Comfort strong, and his Joy sincere; for he found that Part of the Holy Word verified in himself; *Hope maketh not ashamed, because the Love of God is shed abroad in our Hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.* (p)

5. The Love of God is the original Fountain of eternal Glory to the Church. The complete Fruition of God in endless Felicity, cannot proceed from any other Cause, but a free Gift of divine Bounty. Therefore Jesus says to his Lambs, *Fear not, little Flock; for it is your Father's good Pleasure to give you the Kingdom.* (q) And before his Father he pleads it as a free Gift, from his Father to himself, and from him to his Chosen: *The Glory which thou gavest me, I have given them. — Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my Glory which thou hast given me.* (r) This is the highest Summit of Bliss, to which a finite Being can possibly ascend; the brightest Beam of Glory, that can possibly shine upon a Crea-

(o) Heb. vi. 19.

(p) Rom. v. 5.

(q) Luk. xii. 32.

(r) Joh. xvii. 22, 24.

ture : *The Sun shall be no more thy Light by Day, neither for Brightness shall the Moon give Light unto thee : but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting Light, and thy God thy Glory.* (s)—*The City had no need of the Sun, neither of the Moon to shine in it : for the Glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof.*—*They shall see his Face ; and his Name shall be in their Foreheads.* (t) This is the highest Pitch of Perfection to the Church : She enjoys her God, and drinks in the Delights of eternal Love ; whereby she is transformed into the Resemblance of her King, and reflects the Radiance of his supreme Brightness : *The Ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with Songs, and everlasting Joy upon their Heads : they shall obtain Joy and Gladness, and Sorrow and Sighing shall flee away.* (u)—*In thy Presence is Fulness of Joy, at thy right Hand there are Pleasures for evermore.*—*I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy Likeness.* (w)—*Then shall the Righteous shine forth as the Sun, in the Kingdom of their Father.* (x)

In the third Place, I come to consider how the Lord directs his People's Hearts into the Love of God ; and by what Steps he brings them.

The first Part of the Enquiry is, Whereby does the Lord direct their Hearts ? To which the Answer is, He directs them by his sacred Word, and by his Holy Spirit.

1. In the sacred Word, the whole Counsel of God is amply revealed ; his Mind and Will is

(s) Isa. lx. 19. (t) Rev. xxi. 23. xxii. 4. (u) Isa. xxxv. 10. (w) Psal. xvi. 11. xvii. 15. (x) Mat. xiii. 43.

abundantly manifest, in a most pure and conspicuous Light : So that it is a perfect Guide, in all Things of a heavenly Nature. This Word is complete : Nor is there any other Way whereby a Creature can possibly attain to the Knowledge of any Part of the Mind of God, but as they learn it from the Holy Scriptures. For in the Oracles of God, the Master of Assemblies hath bound up the Testimony, and sealed the Law among his Disciples : Therefore, *To the Law and to the Testimony : if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them.* (y) His Word is a perfect System of divine Wisdom ; and the Lord Christ honours it, as being sufficient to direct his Disciples into the Mysteries of Grace : *I have given unto them the Words which thou gavest me ; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.* (z) And Paul largely acknowledges its Sufficiency, both in Matters of Faith and Practice : *All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness ; that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good Works* (a) Yea, the Scripture bears the highest Characters that possibly can be ascribed to it. The Word of God, Word of Christ, Word of Truth, Word of Grace, Word of Life, Word of Righteousness, Word of Salvation, &c. And the greatest Things are attributed to the Efficacy of the Word of God. The LORD

(y) Isa. viii. 16, 20. (z) Joh. xvii. 8. (a) II. Tim. iii. 16, 17.

GOD says, *By every Word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of the LORD doth Man live.* And again, *Is not my Word like as a Fire? saith the LORD: and like a Hammer that breaketh the Rock in Pieces.* (b) Jesus says, *Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but my Words shall not pass away.* And again, *Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you.* (c) David says, *Thy Word hath quickened me.* (d) The Messenger of the Holy Ghost said to Cornelius, concerning Peter, *Who shall tell thee Words, whereby thou and all thy House shall be saved.* (e) Peter says, *Being born again, not of corruptible Seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.* (f) John says, *But whoso keepeth his Word, in him verily is the Love of God perfected.* (g) And Paul says, *Brethren, I commend you to God and to the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an Inheritance among all them which are sanctified.* (h) From all these Testimonies it is undeniable, that Souls are directed into the Love of God, by his holy Word: And this the Disciples understood, when they said to the Lord, *Thou hast the Words of eternal Life.* (i) And David shews it was the rejoicing of his Heart: *I will worship towards thy holy Temple, and praise thy Name, for thy loving Kindness, and for thy Truth: for thou hast magnified thy Word above all thy Name.* (k)

(b) Deut. viii. 3. Jer. xxiii. 29. (c) Mat. xxiv. 35. Joh. xv. 3.
 (d) Psal. cxix. 50. (e) Act. xi. 14. (f) I. Pet. i. 23.
 (g) I. Joh. ii. 5. (h) Act. xx. 32. (i) Joh. vi. 68.
 (k) Psal. cxxxviii. 2.

2. The Holy Ghost is the special Director of his People into the Love of God. Jesus made this Promise to his Disciples; *When he the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth.* (l) Paul ascribes all spiritual Illumination to the Holy Ghost; *As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither have entered into the Heart of Man, the Things which God hath prepared for them that love him: but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.* (m) And when reasoning upon the killing Letter, and the vivifying Spirit, the Vail which is upon the unbelieving Mind, and the taking away thereof by the Lord; he says, *The Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty.* But we all with open Face, beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. (n) These are no empty Speculations, but spiritual Teachings, under divine Influence; which bring the Soul into that very Love of God, where it lives, loves, and delights; where it is renewed, and transformed into the Image of Christ; where it knows and enjoys its Interest in its heavenly Father. As Christ assures us; *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever. — At that Day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.* (o) And John testifies, that this Promise was fulfilled in the Experience of the Saints: *Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit*

(l) Joh. xvi. 13. (m) I. Cor. ii. 9, 10. (n) II. Cor. iii. 17, 18. (o) Joh. xiv. 16, 20.

which he hath given us.—Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. (p) Thus it is clear, that the Spirit of Truth is the alone, and the all-sufficient Director into the Love of God: For, *The Things of God knoweth no Man, but the Spirit of God. (q)*

But we are not to imagine that the Word of God and the Spirit of Truth are two separate Guides; for they are One. The written Word is the Mind of the Holy Spirit: *Holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (r)* He is the Author of the sacred Oracles, and they are the Goings-forth of the Spirit of God: As saith the Lord of Life, *It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the Flesh profiteth nothing: the Words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are Life. (s)* But we must distinguish between the Letter, and the Spirit of the Word: As the Apostle distinguishes, when reasoning upon the Efficacy of the Gospel Ministry; he calls the Believers, *The Epistle of Christ*: and adds—*Ministred by us, written not with Ink, but with the Spirit of the living God.* And again, *Our Sufficiency is of God: who also hath made us able Ministers of the new Testament, not of the Letter, but of the Spirit. (t)* All Men know that Words, whether expressed by Speech or Writing, are only the Form of Conveyance, or the Way of communicating the Mind of one Person to another: And a Person may apprehend the Mode or Sound of what is spoken or written, when he does not at all enter

(p) I. John iii. 24. iv. 13. (q) I. Cor. ii. 11. (r) II. Pet. i. 21. (s) John vi. 63. (t) II. Cor. iii. 3, 5, 6.

into the Mind, or Spirit of the Author. So, Persons may read and hear the Word of God, who never receive it, any further than their Eyes and Ears, or an empty Speculation in their Heads ; and consequently remain destitute of the Mind and Spirit of God therein contained : For it cannot be Spirit and Life to those Persons, into whose Hearts it does not enter ; which is the Case of every unregenerate Soul : *The natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God : for they are Foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* (u) But every faithful Minister of the Gospel, and every true Believer in Christ, receives into his Heart, the Mind, Will, Truth, Love, Grace, Life, and Spirit of God, as revealed in his Word : As the Apostle saith again ; *But we have the Mind of Christ.* (w) For the same Holy Ghost, who has communicated the Mind of God to us in the holy Scriptures, gives the Truth of that Word powerful Access to their Hearts ; they find the Word and eat it ; they drink into one Spirit with Christ. For he reveals his whole Will in his Word, and by his divine Power causes that Revelation to take Place in our Souls. He teaches no other Things but what are exhibited in the Bible, nor does he communicate his Grace any other Way but by his Word. *Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal Life, and they are they which testify of me.* (x) It is by the precious Truths contained in the sacred Word, that the Soul receives, and enjoys all

(u) I. Cor. ii. 14. (w) I. Cor. ii. 16. (x) Joh. v. 39.

spiritual Blessings; but it is thro' the Energy of the holy Spirit they are made effectual. The *Lips* of the Prophet were *touched* with the *live Coal from the Altar*, but it was applied by the *Hand of the Seraph*. (y) It is noted of Christ and his Disciples, *Then opened he their Understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures*. (z) Of *Lydia, Whose Heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the Things which were spoken of Paul*. (a) Of the *Thessalonians*; *Our Gospel came not unto you in Word only, but also in Power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much Assurance*. (b) And of the Audience at *Cesarea*; *While Peter yet spake these Words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word*. (c)

The second Part of the Enquiry is, In what Way, or by what Steps does the Lord direct the Hearts of his People into the Love of God? To which the Answer is, He leads them first thro' divers Passages, or Antichambers, and so brings them to the Door which opens into the heavenly Mystery.

1. He directs their Hearts into a Discovery of the Holiness of God: Convincing them of the infinite Purity, Perfection, and incorruptible Excellency of the supreme Being. This is the first Thing that can be known of God in a spiritual Light. The Holy Ghost, in the holy Scriptures, reveals the holy God: For in God there is nothing but Holiness. Holiness is inseparable from his Existence; it is his Nature; it is his

(y) Isai. vi. 6, 7. (z) Luk. xxiv. 45. (a) Act. xvi. 14.
(b) 1. Thess. i. 5. (c) Act. x. 44.

Effence. All the divine Attributes are perfect Holiness: All the Counsels, Words, and Works of God, are consummately holy. The great JEHOVAH gives this Testimony of himself; *I the Lord your God am holy. (d)*—*Thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth Eternity, whose Name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy Place. (e)* The holy Angels veil their Faces in his Presence, and raise the highest Acclamations to the most adorable Majesty, by this Name HOLY. And because no other Word could so comprehensively express his excellent Greatness, his Glory, and Perfection; they repeat it again and again. *One cried unto another, and said, Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of Hosts. (f)* And the living Intelligences, in the midst, and round about his Throne, adore in the same Manner, *They rest not Day and Night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty. (g)* The Saints acknowledge his tremendous Holiness, with the most profound Reverence: *Who is like unto thee, O LORD, amongst the Gods? Who is like thee, glorious in Holiness, fearful in Praises, doing Wonders? (h)*—*And the Men of Beth-shemish said, Who is able to stand before this Holy LORD God? (i)*

2. He directs their Hearts into a Discovery of their own Sinfulness. To see the Corruption of their Natures, and the Iniquity of their Lives. For it must cause a convincing Reflection in the Conscience, and strike us with a deep Sense of our own Depravity and Pollution; to behold the

(d) Levit. xix. 2. (e) Isai. lvii. 15. (f) Isai. vi. 3.
 (g) Rev. iv. 8. (h) Exod. xv. 11. (i) I. Sam. vi. 20.

immaculate Purity of our Creator; who is our Law-giver and our Judge; by whose omnipotent Hand we are perpetually sustained; before whose omniscient Eye we perpetually stand; and whose Holiness must abominate every Thing that is tainted with Sin: As saith the Prophet, *Art thou not from Everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One?—Thou art of purer Eyes than to behold Evil, and canst not look on Iniquity.* (k) Such a View of the flaming Holiness of God, in it's refulgent Rays, as it shines in the divine Oracles, impressed upon the Mind by the Spirit of Holiness, will bring the Soul to an humble Confession of Sin. So *David* confessed; *I acknowledge my Transgressions: and my Sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this Evil in thy Sight.* (l) So *Job*; *Behold I am vile.* (m) So *Isaiab*; *Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a Man of unclean Lips.* (n) And likewise *Peter*; *I am a sinful Man, O Lord.* (o) And this is not the Case of Individuals only, but of the whole Race of Mankind: *They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doth Good, no not one.* (p) *Solomon* well understood the Depravity of all the human Species, when he made this Prayer for the People; *What Prayer and Supplication soever be made by any Man, or by all thy People Israel, which shall know every Man the Plague of his own Heart, &c.* (q) And this Plague is a universal Pollution, thro' all the Faculties of the Soul: *God saw that the Wickedness of Man was great in*

(k) Hab. i. 12, 13. (l) Psal. li. 3, 4. (m) Job xl. 4.
 (n) Isai. vi. 5. (o) Luk. v. 8. (p) Psal. xiv. 3. liii. 3.
 (q) I. Kin. viii. 38.

the Earth, and that every Imagination of the Thoughts of his Heart was only evil continually. (r) And it is not confined to some certain Periods of Life, but runs through the whole Course of Nature: *For the Imagination of Man's Heart is evil from his Youth. (s)* And the Infection is so deep, that the Nature of Man cannot produce any better Fruit: *We are all as an unclean Thing, and all our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags, and we all do fade as a Leaf, and our Iniquities, like the Wind, have taken us away. (t)* Yea, Sin hath produced in the Mind of Man such Pride, Enmity, Blindness, and Hardness of Heart; that unless the Spirit of Holiness, by the Light of the sacred Word, is pleased to pierce his Conscience with an awful Sense of the Holiness of God; he is not to be convinced of his own Sinfulness: *Strangers have devoured his Strength, and he knoweth it not: yea, gray Hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not. (u)* But every Soul that is blessed with a Discovery of God's Holiness, is deeply convinced of his own Vileness: *For I know that in me (that is in my Flesh) dwelleth no good Thing. (w)*

3. He directs their Hearts into the Knowledge of the Perfection of the righteous Law; whereby they have a Discovery of the Wretchedness of their own State, by reason of Sin. For all Mankind must be judged according to the Rectitude and Immutability of the Law; concerning which the Scripture bears this Testimony;

(r) Gen. vi. 5.

(s) Gen. viii. 21.

(t) Isai. lxiv. 6.

(u) Hof. vii. 9.

(w) Rom. vii. 18.

The Law is holy; and the Commandment holy, and just, and good. (x) And the Son of God assures us, Till Heaven and Earth pass, one jot or one Tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled. (y) Therefore the Law must pronounce Sentence against every Sinner: And every Sentence pronounced by the Law must be carried into Execution by the God of Justice, who is Judge of all. For the Scripture saith, As many as are of the Works of the Law, are under the Curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them. (z)—Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Cursed be the Man that obeyeth not the Words of this Covenant. (a) The Law of God stands in the Form of a Covenant; and every Article is ratified by the divine Sanction: Therefore every Violation is certain to receive a vindictive Retaliation; or according to sacred Language; Every Transgression and Disobedience received a just Recompence of Reward. (b) As the righteous Judge saith, The Soul that sinneth, it shall die. (c)—For the Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all Ungodliness, and Unrighteousness of Men. (d) Hence it is, that all the Sons of Adam (considered in a State of Nature and Sin) are in a wretched, miserable, helpless, hopeless Condition: Wherefore remember—That at that Time ye were without Christ, being Aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel, and Strangers from the Covenants of Promise, having no Hope, and without

(x) Rom. vii. 12.

(y) Mat. v. 18.

(z) Gal. iii. 10.

(a) Jer. xi. 3.

(b) Heb. ii. 2.

(c) Exek. xviii. 4.

(d) Rom. i. 18.

God in the World. (e)—He that believeth not the Son, shall not see Life; but the Wrath of God abideth on him. (f)

4. The Lord having directed their Hearts thro' these previous Galleries, or Anti-chambers, he directs them to the Door, which opens into the celestial Palace, where ineffable Glory shines, and inexhaustible Treasures abound; to Jesus, in whom the Love of God openeth itself to us: *For in him dwelleth all the Fulness of the Godhead bodily. (g)* Every Soul that is under the special Influence of the Holy Ghost, is by the infallible Word of Life directed to Christ: *All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me.—Every Man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. (h)* There is no Way to the Father, but by the Son; and he that is directed to the Son, is assuredly brought to the Father: *No Man knoweth the Son but the Father: neither knoweth any Man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. (i)—I am the Door: by me if any Man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find Pasture.—I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: no Man cometh unto the Father but by me. (k)* And whosoever cometh to the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Ghost, is introduced into an immense Expansion of divine Grace: As the Apostle prays for the *Ephesians*; *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation,*

(e) Eph. ii. 11, 12. (f) John iii. 36. (g) Col. ii. 9.
 (h) Joh. vi. 37, 45. (i) Mat. xi. 27. (k) Joh. x. 9. xiv. 6.

in the Knowledge of him: The Eyes of your Understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the Hope of his Calling, and what the Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the Saints.—That ye might be filled with all the Fulness of God. (l) And the Blessing is actually experienced by the Saints: *For God who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, hath shined in our Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God, in the Face of Jesus Christ. (m)*

Whatever Wants or Deficiencies they might apprehend under the former Discoveries, they now find an ample Supply in *EMMANUEL*. He is the perfect Holiness of God; and he is theirs, and they are his, in an everlasting Covenant: Therefore, in his Holiness they stand complete: *I am the LORD, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King. (n)*—*In the Body of his Flesh through Death, to present you holy and unblameable, and unreprouable in his Sight.—And ye are complete in him, which is the Head of all Principality and Power. (o)* In him is full Redemption, perfect Righteousness, Peace with God, and everlasting Salvation.—*With the LORD there is Mercy, and with him is plenteous Redemption. (p)*—*This is his Name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. (q)* Being justified by Faith, we have Peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. *(r)*—*Truly in the Lord our God is the Salvation of Israel. (s)* In him is all purifying Grace, to purge the Conscience, and

(l) Eph. i. 17, 18. iii. 19. (m) II. Cor. iv. 6. (n) Isai. xliii. 15. (o) Col. i. 22. ii. 10. (p) Psal. cxxx. 7. (q) Jer. xxiii. 6. (r) Rom. v. 1. (s) Jer. iii. 23.

cleanse the Soul from Pollution: *Then will I sprinkle clean Water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your Filthinefs, and from all your Idols will I cleanse you. A new Heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the Stony Heart out of your Flesh, and I will give you an Heart of Flesh.* (t)—*I will cleanse their Blood that I have not cleansed.* (u) *He shall sit as a Refiner and Purifier of Silver.* (w) —*God which knoweth the Hearts, bare them Witness, giving them the Holy Ghost—purifying their Hearts by Faith.* (x) Yea, they find, in the Lord of Glory, not only an ample Supply of all Things which they ever did, or ever can want, but a Plenitude of all Riches, Excellencies, Glories, and Felicities, that it is possible for a created Being to enjoy, or desire. *There the glorious LORD will be unto us a Place of broad Rivers and Streams.* (y)—*For since the Beginning of the World Men have not heard, nor perceived by the Ear, neither hath the Eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.* (z)

I come in the fourth Place, to consider some of the Effects of the Love of God, in the Hearts of those who are directed into it.

1. Where the Love of God is efficaciously manifested, it produces Faith. That Soul receives the Truths of the everlasting Gospel with full Assent, and embraces them with sincere Approbation; and according to the Tenor of those evangelical Doctrines, it seeks to the Lord

(t) Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26. (u) Joel iii. 21. (w) Mal. iii. 3.

(x) Act. xv. 8, 9. (y) Isai. xxxiii. 21. (z) Isai. lxiv. 4.

Jesus Christ for Remission of Sins, and Salvation; it waits on him for all the Communications of spiritual Grace, and trusts in him alone for eternal Life. *They that know thy Name will put their Trust in thee.* (a) And this Faith worketh by Love: So far as a Soul loves the Lord, he equally trusteth in him; and so far as he trusts in the Lord, he loves him in Proportion: *I will love thee, O LORD, my Strength.* (b) And where this Faith and Love unite, the Soul takes his Satisfaction in God, and rejoices in the Lord as his Portion: *The Lord is my Portion, saith my Soul, therefore will I hope in him.* (c) The Height of his Desire is, to enjoy Communion with his God; the Extent of his Ambition is, to bear the Image of Christ, in Righteousness and true Holiness; and his utmost Emulation is, to bring Glory to his heavenly Father. For the Love of God manifested to him, kindles all the Powers of his Soul in Love to God: *We love him; because he first loved us.* (d) And where Faith and Love are, there is Humility. No Man can love God, or believe in him in Spirit and Truth, any farther than his Soul is laid low in a deep Sense of his own Unworthiness, and a profound Reverence of the Majesty of God; for a Manifestation of the Love and Grace of God, has a natural Tendency to humble the Soul, and abase the Pride of Man: *The Loftiness of Man shall be bowed down, and the Haughtiness of Men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted*

(a) Psal. ix. 10. (b) Psal. xviii. 1. (c) Lam. iii. 24.
 (d) I. Joh. iv. 19.

in that Day. (e)—That no Flesh should glory in his Presence. (f)—God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. (g) This Faith, working by Love and Humility, is the Gift of God, peculiar to his Chosen; it centers in the Son of God, the consecrated Mediator between God and Man, as the fixed Object of Reliance; and it is wrought by the quick and powerful Word of God, through the vital Influence of the Holy Ghost: Therefore it is called, *The Faith of God's Elect. (h)—The Faith of the Son of God. (i)—The Faith of the Operation of God. (k)* All the Children of God experience this divine Operation in their Souls, and they know that it is wrought by the Opening of the Love of God in his Word: But it may be at their first Calling, they sometimes may not understand how the Holy Ghost operates in opening their Hearts, and giving the Word Access. But like a Man who feels himself wounded, and knows very well it is done by the Edge of a Sword, but is not aware of the Hand that weilds it; so they very sensibly feel the Dint of God's Word (the Sword of the Spirit) in their Hearts, but do not clearly understand how it comes to make such an effectual Impression. But as they arrive at a clearer Understanding of the Nature of Sin, and the Nature of Grace, and a more distinguishing Judgment in divine Truths, they are fully convinced, that it was not of their own Free-Will, or the Flexibleness of their Dis-

(e) Isai. ii. 11, 17. (f) I. Cor. i. 29. (g) Gal. vi. 14.

(h) Tit. i. 1. (i) Gal. ii. 20. (k) Col. ii. 12.

positions, but the Spirit of Life from God giving Sanction to the Word of his Grace. Nor do they ascribe this Work of Faith, or spiritual Life in their Souls, to any chimerical Operation or enthusiastical Communication; as if it were done by some occult Power, they know not how. For every Believer knows, that Faith is wrought by the Manifestation of the Love of God, and the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in his Word: *Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.* (l)—*These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have Life through his Name.* (m)—*In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your Salvation.* (n)

2. The Love of God works Repentance. For as it produces Faith, whereby the Soul relies upon Christ, his Salvation; which works by Love, whereby the whole Heart cleaves to Christ, his Life; and which causes Humility, whereby the whole Will melts into the Will of his heavenly Father; he is spiritually joined to the Lord, and blessed with the same Mind that is in Christ: *He that is joined unto the Lord, is one Spirit.* (o) Therefore, whatever is God is the Object of that Soul's Delight. And as the Essence of God is Holiness, it is impossible for any one to be a Believer, but Holiness will be the Desire of his Heart: Nor is it possible for any one to love Holiness, but Sin will become the Object

(l) Rom. x. 17. (m) Joh. xx. 31. (n) Eph. i. 13. (o) I Cor. vi. 17.

of his Abomination. And hence it is, that every believing Soul is a penitent Soul: He loaths his own Sinitulness; with godly Sorrow for what is past, deep Contrition for the evil Disposition present, with earnest Endeavours and Cries to God for Purification, both in Heart and Life. For all Men are polluted with Sin: But when God is pleased to bless any one with a Principle of Holiness; then the Enmity appears, then the War begins between the two Seeds: As God said to the Serpent, *I will put Enmity between thee and the Woman, and between thy Seed and her Seed.* (p) For when Grace enters the Soul, and finds Sin in Possession of all the intellectual Faculties, Hostilities must commence. No League can be made, no Convention entered into, nor can any Peace be restored, but upon the Extirpation of Sin: *What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the Company of two Armies.* (q) But tho' the Soul is not yet delivered from the Virulence of Sin, it truly is the Subject of Grace; for neuter it cannot be. As Paul saith, *With the Mind I myself serve the Law of God; but with the Flesh the Law of Sin.* (r) As a People loyal to their own Prince serve him with their Hearts; but so far as an Enemy prevails, and makes Depredations upon them; for want of Power to withstand, they serve him with their Substance. Every believing Heart loves God, and hates Sin; mourns for it's past Transgressions, and abhors it's present Filthiness: As Ezra; *O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my Face to thee, my God: for our*

(p) Gen. iii. 15. (q) Cant. vi. 13. (r) Rom. vii. 25.

Iniquities are increased over our Head, and our Trespass is grown up into the Heavens. (s) So Daniel; O Lord, to us belongeth Confusion of Face —because we have sinned against thee. (t) Likewise Job; I abhor myself, and repent in Dust and Ashes. (u) Repentance is the Gift of God; a Blessing which Christ bestows upon every one to whom he grants pardoning Mercy; for they are inseparable: Him hath God exalted with his right Hand, to be a Prince und a Saviour, for to give Repentance to Israel, and Forgiveness of Sins. (w) And it is according to the Promise of God; They shall come with Weeping, and with Supplications will I lead them. (x) And so the Saints experience their Hearts drawn to God: Create in me a clean Heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me. (y) Yea, the Way in which God has promised to work Repentance, cannot fail to be effectual; that is, by a Discovery of his Love streaming in the Blood of Jesus, or Christ crucified for our Sins: They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only Son, and shall be in Bitterness for him, as one that is in Bitterness for his First-born. (z) And every Soul that has the Experience of genuine Repentance, can declare, that the first effectual Operation whereby that Repentance was produced in his Heart, was a lively View of a pierced Jesus, bruised for his Iniquities, and pouring out his Soul unto Death for his Transgressions. Nothing else can so

(s) Ezra ix. 6. (t) Dan. ix. viii. (u) Job xlii. 6. (w) Act. v. 31. (x) Jer. xxxi. 9. (y) Psal. li. 10. (z) Zech. xii. 10.

effectually melt the Heart into an undissembled Contrition, or raise such deep Remorse in the Conscience for Sin ; as to behold the Son of God ! the spotless Lamb ! the Holy One ! in torturing Agonies, dying under my Sins ! And that Repentance, which is wrought in the Soul under a spiritual Manifestation of heavenly Grace, flowing in the Redeemer's Blood, will continue ; and will be manifest in the Conversation : *How shall we that are dead to Sin, live any longer therein ?—Our old Man is crucified with him, that the Body of Sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve Sin.—Being made free from Sin, and become Servants to God, ye have your Fruit unto Holiness.* (a)

3. The Love of God produces chearful Obedience. For he that loves God, as the highest Object of Delight and Adoration, must love his Law, and take Pleasure in keeping his Commandments. The Lord Jesus lays it before his Disciples, as the Criterion of their Love to him : *He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.—If a Man love me, he will keep my Words.* (b) The Glory of God is a most tender Point, in the Eyes of every one that loves him : And they are taught to glorify him in a holy Conversation : *Let your Light so shine before Men, that they may see your good Works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.* (c) David fully shews the Disposition of his Mind, by such Expressions as these ; *O how love I thy Law !—Thy Law do I love.—I love thy Testimonies.—I love*

(a) Rom. vi. 2, 6, 22. (b) John xiv. 21, 23. (c) Mat. v. 16.

thy Commandments above Gold, yea, above fine Gold. —My Soul hath kept thy Testimonies: and I love them exceedingly. (d) Paul freely declares the Effect which the Love of Christ had upon him; When it pleased God, who separated me from my Mother's Womb, and called me by his Grace, to reveal his Son in me—immediately I conferred not with Flesh and Blood.—I was not disobedient to the heavenly Vision. (e) And he gives a Reason undeniably cogent, why himself, as well as all other Believers, live to the Glory of God: For the Love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. (f) And John dwells upon it, as a fixed Maxim; That the Love of God, and Obedience to his Commandments, stand together, in an inseparable Connexion. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a Liar, and the Truth is not in him.—This is the Love of God, that we keep his Commandments.—This is Love, that we walk after his Commandments. (g)

4. The Love of God brings the Soul to a chearful Resignation to his Will. For Love naturally carries the Will into a Compliance with the Will of the Person we highly esteem and delight in: And how much more shall the Love of God have this Effect; seeing God himself is Love? And the Passion of Love in our Hearts,

(d) Psal. cxix. 97, 113, 119, 127, 167. (e) Gal. i. 15, 16. Act. xxvi. 19. (f) II. Cor. v. 14, 15. (g) I. Joh. ii. 4. v. 3. II. Joh. 6.

is kindled by a vital Ray from his Bosom. And hereby they find themselves so united to their God, that their Wills are involved in his Will : And have their Confidence so fixed in their heavenly Father, that they can ingenuously say, *He shall chuse our Inheritance for us.* (b) And the most powerful convincing Reason is joined with the heavenly Passion, for the composing of their Minds into an Acquiescence with the divine Will. For the Saints know right well, that all the Dispensations of Providence are directed by infallible Wisdom, and uninterrupted Love: And cannot fail to terminate to their Advantage ; whether they appear with them, or against them, at present. *We know that all Things work together for good, to them that love God.* (i) Therefore they learn with Patience, to commit themselves unto the Lord, depending on his Word : *What I do thou knowest not now ; but thou shalt know hereafter.* (k) And being Members of his Body, and having the same Spirit ; they earnestly imitate his Example, who said to his Father, *Not my Will but thine be done.* (l) And in humble Compliance with the divine Determination, *Committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.* (m) Thus *Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith.* (n) They follow their great High Priest, in Submission to their heavenly Father's Instruction. *My Son despise not thou the Chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.* (o) For they know that all his Counsels are Faithful-

(b) Psal. xlvii. 4. (i) Rom. viii. 28. (k) Joh. xiii. 7.

(l) Luk. xxii. 42. (m) I. Pet. ii. 23. (n) Heb. xii. 2.

(o) Heb. xii. 5.

ness, and all his Works are done in Truth. *That the Trial of your Faith being much more precious than of Gold that perisheth, though it be tried with Fire, might be found unto Praise, and Honour, and Glory at the Appearing of Jesus Christ.* (p) The Children of God in all Ages, are led by the same Spirit of Faith, as *Abraham* was, who trusted in God : *And so after he had patiently endured he obtained the Promise.* (q)

This brings me to consider, The patient Waiting for Christ. Which is inseparable from a humble Submission to the Will of God : And therefore is the natural Consequence of the Love of God, in those Hearts which are under the Direction of the Lord. Love to an Object begets an Inclination to wait for it ; and the Strength of that Love, produces Patience in Waiting. And this patient waiting for Christ, is one Branch of Submission to the divine Pleasure ; and is exercised respecting the Time of the Fruition of the promised Blessing ; when they shall be *called unto the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb.* (r) It does not consist with an unconcerned Insensibility ; this is not Patience, but Indolence ; and foreign to the Spirit of Christ. Nor can it consist with Timidity of Mind, or a shrinking back, at the Apprehension of Christ's Coming : This is not Patience, but Reluctance ; and very different from that Love which casteth out Fear : Neither does it consist with a restless Urgency of Desire ; whereby the Mind grows flat, re-

(p) I. Pet. i. 7. (q) Heb. vi. 15. (r) Rev. xix. 9.

specting the Duties and Enjoyments of waiting upon and glorifying God here below : This is not Patience, but Discontentedness. And tho' the Desire (simply considered) may proceed from the Love of God ; the Anxiety is a plain Deviation therefrom, and argues that the Mind is not duly exercised therein. Nor yet does it consist with an eager Fondness, or Over-Ardency of Desire ; whereby the Mind is elevated above it's proper Sphere, so as not to retain a due Sense of it's own Imperfections, the Power of innate Corruption, the Danger of Temptation, the Necessity of Watchfulness, &c. This is not Patience, but unregulated Passion ; and (supposing the Desire to proceed from the Love of God, yet) this kind of Elevation favours more of carnal Humour, than of the Spirit of Christ. But the patient waiting for Christ, is a Fruit of the Love of God, sweetly composing the Soul into an humble Submission to his Will, and establishing it in a well-grounded Hope upon the Faithfulness of God, according to his Word : *If we hope for that we see not, then do we with Patience wait for it.*(s)

1. They patiently wait for Christ, in consideration of his Promise, to come again to them. While the Promise of his second Coming, clearly shews the Glory and Felicity which the Saints have to expect ; the Faithfulness of that Promise, and the Certainty of his Appearing, strengthens their Minds to wait with Patience : *Jacob served*

(s) Rom. viii. 25.

seven Years for Rachel: and they seemed unto him but a few Days, for the Love he had to her. (t) When all he had to expect was, The uncertain Enjoyment of a Creature full of Imperfections, for a few Years: Then, what shall interrupt the patient Waiting of a Child of God, for the certain Enjoyment of him who is the Life of all Perfection, to infinite Duration; whose Promises give the most firm Assurance, and express the most tender Affection? *Let not your Hearts be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's House are many Mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a Place for you. And if I go and prepare a Place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. (u)* The Angels gave Testimony to the Certainty of his Coming: *This same Jesus which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come, in like Manner as ye have seen him go into Heaven. (w)* The Expeditionness of his Coming is declared to the Hebrews: *For yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. (x)* And by himself often repeated; *Behold, I come quickly. (y)* And the Glory and Felicity which the Saints shall possess at his Coming, is represented in a Multiplicity of Promises; and particularly by a great Voice out of Heaven, which John testifies that he heard, saying, *Behold the Tabernacle of God is with Men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his People, and God himself shall be*

(t) Gen. xxix. 20. (u) Joh. xiv. 1, 2, 3. (w) Act. i. 11.
 (x) Heb. x. 37. (y) Rev. iii. 11. xxii. 7. 12. 20.

with them, and be their God, &c. (z) These great and precious Promises, full of strong Consolation, leave not the least Ground of Suspicion, or Room to doubt, whether his Coming may be uncertain, or the Time protracted, or the Saints disappointed in their Expectation. And upon the Strength of the infallible Promises, the Disciples of Jesus are admonished to Patience in waiting for him: *Be patient therefore, Brethren, unto the Coming of the Lord.—Be ye also patient; stablish your Hearts: for the Coming of the Lord draweth nigh. (a)*

2. They patiently wait for Christ's Coming, having his Promise for their present Support, that he will be with them, during their Pilgrimage in this World. Were they to be left destitute of the Presence of their Lord, it would be a very disconsolate Thought, sufficient to wear out their Patience, and break their Hearts. But being assured, that during his personal Absence his spiritual Presence shall be with them; it gives fresh Vigour to their Hearts, to wait with Patience, until the Time appointed of the Father. Their Souls are strengthened by those Bands of Love, wherewith he hath bound himself to them, in his faithful Word: *I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my People. (b)—Fear thou not, for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God. (c)—Lo, I am with you always, even unto the End of the*

(z) Rev. xxi. 3, 4, 5. (a) Jam. v. 7, 8. (b) Levit. xxvi. 12. (c) Isai. xli. 10.

World. (d)—*I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. (e)* Where his Presence is, there is a rich Supply of all Good : *With thee is the Fountain of Life : (f)* And a sure Defence against Evil : *For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a Wall of Fire round about. (g)* By this Light they walk through the thickest Darkness ; as *David* says, *Though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no Evil : for thou art with me. (h)* If he is pleased to permit them to come into Temptations, Trials, and Distresses, his Presence is promised to sustain them, and secure their Deliverance : *When thou passest through the Waters, I will be with thee ; and through the Rivers, they shall not overflow thee : when thou walkest through the Fire, thou shalt not be burnt ; neither shall the Flame kindle upon thee. (i)*—*God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able ; but will with the Temptation also make a Way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. (k)* Yea, his Presence yields such Peace and Consolation, as all the Universe is not able to give ; neither are all the Powers of Darkness able to take it away. *I will not leave you comfortless ; I will come to you.—Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you : not as the World giveth, give I unto you. Let not your Heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (l)*

3. The Assurance which God's Children have,
That all Occurrences which happen to them, and

(d) Mat. xxviii. 20. (e) Heb. xiii. 5. (f) Psal. xxxvi. 9. (g) Zech. ii. 5. (h) Psal. xxiii. 4. (i) Isai. xliii. 2. (k) I. Cor. x. 13. (l) Joh. xiv. 18. 27.

all providential Circumstances which attend them in this World, are, under the Direction of their heavenly Father's Hand, guided in Love, Wisdom, and Faithfulness, and cannot fail to issue in their Good; is a strong Excitement to Patience, in their waiting for Christ's Coming. Whatever Trials, Temptations, or Afflictions; whatever Self-Denial, Cross to take up, or Difficulty attends the Way, it must terminate in a Blessing to the Saints. The Lord declares to *Israel*, his gracious Design in leading them thro' an inhospitable Wilderness; *That he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee Good at thy latter End.* (m) And the Psalmist descanting upon the Dealings of God with his People, in leading them through the Wilderness, comes to this Result; *He led them forth by the right Way, that they might go to a City of Habitation.* (n) The Tribulations through which they passed, were no other than a well-regulated School, for their Accomplishment in Things relating to God's Glory, and their own Happiness. And the Author to the *Hebrews* excellently reasons upon the well-grounded Motive, the salutary Design, and happy Effect of God's chastening Rod: *Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth.—For our Profit, that we might be Partakers of his Holiness.—It yieldeth the peaceable Fruit of Righteousness.* (o) And in the same Light Paul views the Afflictions of the Saints, as a Preparative for the expected Glory; and from thence (as

(m) Deut. viii. 16. (n) Psal. cvii. 4, 5, 6, 7. (o) Heb. xii. 5, to 11.

it were) looks all his Sorrows into Nothing, or as a few Mole-Hills, which serve as so many Foot-steps, to help forward in the Way towards the everlasting Mountains; which rising infinitely high above all temporal Things, drown the Aspect of the Troubles which lie between: *For which Cause we faint not, but though our outward Man perish, yet the inward Man is renewed Day by Day. For our light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.* (p)

4. The Greatness of the Glory that shall be revealed at Christ's Coming, is a powerful Motive with the Saints, patiently to wait for him. *For I reckon, says the Apostle, that the Sufferings of this present Time, are not worthy to be compared with the Glory that shall be revealed in us.* (q) The unmeasurable Height of the Glory, and Eternity of it's Duration, makes all earthly Things disappear; or causes them to decline into faint Shadows, and their Duration into an inconsiderable Moment, when compared with the Delights of the celestial Paradise; *Where Christ sitteth on the right Hand of God.* (r) And where the Saints shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament, and, as the Stars for ever and ever. (s) Which they now by Faith behold, with inexpressible Delight, as the ultimate Satisfaction of their Souls: *Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with Joy un-*

(p) II. Cor. iv. 16, 17. (q) Rom. viii. 18. (r) Col. iii. 1.
(s) Dan. xii. 3.

speaking, and full of Glory. (t)—Let us be glad and rejoice, and give Honour to him: for the Marriage of the Lamb is come, and his Wife hath made herself ready. (u) Such a blessed Hope may well establish their Hearts, to wait with Patience, and expect with Cheerfulness, The glorious Appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ. (w) When they shall dwell in the immediate Presence of him whose Glory fills the Heavens, and reflects Lustre upon the whole Creation; under whose resplendent Beams of Light, Life, Love, Joy, Glory, and Immortality, they shall possess all the Communications of Blessedness, to their consummate Felicity; and bear the lively Image of the Son of God, to their immortal Glory: For our Conversation is in Heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile Body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body. (x)—Beloved, now are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. (y)

It now remains, that we endeavour to make some Use of this Doctrine, by Way of Improvement to ourselves. Our dear Brother is (with us) no more; Nor are the Instructions to be directed to him, but to us who survive: Yet, this precious Doctrine of the Love of God, which was so comfortable to him during Life, and Armour

(t) I. Pet. i. 8.

(u) Rev. xix. 7.

(w) Tit. ii. 13.

(x) Phil. iii. 20, 21.

(y) I. Joh. iii. 2.

of Proof at the Approach of Death, may yield to us the same Consolation, if it shall please the Lord to direct our Hearts into it by the same Spirit. Wherefore it is necessary that we seriously attend to it, in a few particular Reflections.

1. How necessary is it for every one to come close to the Point with themselves: Hath the Lord directed my Heart into the Love of God? Jesus put the Matter home to his Disciples; *Have ye understood all these Things?* (z)—*Do ye now believe?* (a) And to Peter, he thrice over put the Question; *Simon Son of Jonas, lovest thou me?* (b) For the Love of God communicated to a Soul, always produces a Return of Love to God. And hereby the Objects of God's Love are distinguished from others; they love God, which is an incontestable Proof, that God loves them. For no Man ever loved God in Spirit and in Truth, until that Love of God was produced in his Heart, by a special Manifestation of the Love of God to him. Therefore the Apostle affirms, *If any Man love God, the same is known of him.* (c) This is that Love, which fortifies the Mind against all Terror, in Life and in Death, having God it's Original, God it's Author, and God it's Object: *There is no Fear in Love; but perfect Love casteth out Fear.* (d) Not Love consider'd (meerly) as a Passion in us: This cannot cast out Fear. But Love as it is in

(z) Mat. xiii. 51. (a) Joh. xvi. 31. (b) Joh. xxi. 15, 16, 17. (c) I. Cor. viii. 3. (d) I. Joh. iv. 18.

God, and from him shed abroad in our Hearts, transforming our Souls into the Image of the Son of his Love: *For Love is of God; every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.* (e)

This Love was the invincible Support of our dear Brother. The Ground of his Hope was not a Fiction: It was God himself, who is Love. Nor was his Heart fictitiously directed into this Love: But according to the infallible Directions given in the Oracles of God, under the attracting, cementing, enlarging, establishing Operation of the Holy Ghost. He was enlarged by Faith, to behold the Love of the Father and the Son in it's sublime Excellency; in the Glory and Perfection of it's Nature and Properties. His Soul was illuminated to admire the incomprehensible Greatness of the Majesty of divine Grace, in the inconceivably glorious Productions of the Love of God. His Heart was opened, to view the Holiness of God, and the Righteousness of his Law; whereby he was convinced of his own Sinfulness, and his Need of such a Saviour as Jesus is. He was efficaciously drawn to Christ, by the Love of God; and found him to be such a Saviour as he wanted. This great Redeemer he found to be the Salvation of God to his Soul; and with Joy and Gratitude, ascribed all the Glory to his Holy Name: for the Lord had put this Song in his Mouth; *Thou hast in Love to my Soul delivered it from the Pit of Corruption.* (f)

(e) I. Joh. iv. 7.

(f) Isai. xxxviii. 17.

He found him to be a Sanctifier, to work Repentance, and purge the Conscience from dead Works; to heal the Plague of the Heart, and regulate the Conversation; for which he ascribed the Praise alone to God, the Spirit of Holiness; acknowledging himself to be *A Brand pluckt out of the Fire.* (g) Yea, he found him to be the Door, whereby his Soul had Access to the Father's Bosom; where he found Life and Peace, Joy and strong Consolation; and could say with Assurance, *In the LORD have I Righteousness and Strength.* (h)—Thus, our dear Brother, being built upon that which cannot be shaken, found himself stand secure against the Gates of Hell. His Foundation was, *The Rock of Ages*; and his Soul was built thereon by the grand Architect (*EMMANUEL*) whom God appointed to build a Mansion for himself; saying, *He shall build the Temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the Glory.* (i) And Jesus saith, *Upon this Rock I will build my Church: and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.* (k) He put no Confidence in any moral Virtue, or human Performance; knowing very well, That however valuable a virtuous Disposition and an upright Conversation are among Men, and well pleasing in the Sight of God, so far as they are in Conformity to his Law, they can bear no Proportion to the Holiness of God, and the extensive Perfection of the divine Precept. He had learned the Lesson of

(g) Zech. iii. 2. (h) Isai. xlv. 24. (i) Zech. vi. 13.
 (k) Mat. xvi. 18.

the Psalmist; *I have seen an End of all Perfection; but thy Commandment is exceeding broad.* (l) Therefore, notwithstanding he might have had much more to glory of, respecting Holiness of Conversation, than many that go about to establish their own Righteousness; yet, I am assured, that with Regard to Justification, Acceptance with God, and eternal Salvation; he put no more Confidence in his own Righteousness, than in the Dust under his Feet; no more than he put in the Devil himself. Christ was to him, *All in all.*—*Who of God was made unto him Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption.* (m) Nor did he trust in any chimerical Imaginations, or enthusiastical Fantaimes, as Evidences of his Interest in Christ; he knew to distinguish between the Chaff and the Wheat: And thro' Grace, could say, *I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.* (n) His Faith was firm, his Hope was solid, his Comfort was immovable; because it knew no Foundation but that which is Proof against all the Powers of Darkness; against all the Machinations of the Bottomless Pit; and cannot be subverted by all the formidable Approaches of Earth or Sin, Death or Hell. His Soul was founded upon the everlasting Love of *J E H O V A H*; the plenary Satisfaction made, Redemption wrought, and everlasting Righteousness brought in by the Blood of Jesus; and the sustaining, comforting, persevering Grace of the Spirit of Holiness. And to the last, he found his God faithful, according

(l) Psal. cxix. 96. (m) I. Cor. i. 30. (n) Gal. ii. 20.

to his Word: *They shall not be ashamed that wait for me.* (o)—*He that believeth on him shall not be confounded.* (p)

Therefore, my Friends, This is what I recommend to you; a deliberate Examination, Whether your Hearts are directed into the same Love, and your Souls built upon the same impregnable Rock? For if you are not, you cannot patiently wait for Christ; nor can you take a deliberate Prospect of approaching Death, without trembling.—I am very sensible, Persons may be infatuated, so as to have no Bands in their Death; and thro' Insensibility, may approach Death without Fear; but if their Eyes be open, to apprehend it in it's true Light, and themselves not substantially directed into the Love of God, and established upon the Righteousness of Christ, Death will be *The King of Terrors*. Yea, they find, when they take a serious Thought of Death, with the ensuing Judgment, and final Sentence, &c. there rises an irregular Beating about their Hearts, and they chule to evade the Contemplation. They cannot endure the Word; *Thine Heart shall meditate Terror*: because they do not enjoy the Blessing promised; *Thine Eyes shall see the King in his Beauty.* (q)—I know it is a very easy Matter for a Person to buoy up himself with a strong Conceit of his own Righteousness, and build his Hopes thereon with great Confidence, so far as to imagine his Heart strong, and his Mind able to stand without

(o) Isai. xlix. 23.
17, 18.

(p) I. Pet. ii. 6.

(q) Isai. xxxiii.

Fear. But how long will it endure? Just so long as *Adam's* Leaves covered his Nakedness. While no Eye beheld him but his own. But when the Lord God came to inspect him, he fled and hid himself, because he was naked. So the Righteousness of Man may be sufficient for his Justification, so long as he appears before no other Bar but his own corrupt Reason, and impartial Judgment: But when his Works and Virtues come to be tried by the Standard of Perfection, the eternal holy Law of God; when God shall search his Heart, and try his Reins, by his quick and powerful Word, and shall take away the Mask, and cause his Works and Virtues to appear in their naked Light, as they appear before his own flaming Holiness and inexorable Justice; then those imaginary *Pillars of Heaven*, will be found to *tremble*, and be *astonished at his Reproof*. (r) How will that deceived Heart shudder to see what broken Reeds he trusted in; when God, the Judge of all, shall put the Question home to his Conscience; *Can thine Heart endure, or can thine Hands be strong in the Days that I shall deal with thee?* (s)

2. To those whose Hearts are directed into the Love of God: Here is Matter of solid Comfort, That they shall still be led further into these rich Blessings. The *Thessalonians* were already introduced into the Enjoyment of God in Christ; yet the Apostle prays, That their Hearts might be directed; that is, into further Manifestations

(r) Job xxvi. 11.

(s) Ezek. xxii. 14.

thereof, according as he had before expressed ; *That our God would count you worthy of this Calling, and fulfil all the good Pleasure of his Goodness, and the Work of Faith with Power.* (t) And according to that Assurance which he expressed to the *Philippians : Being confident of this very Thing, that he which hath begun a good Work in you, will perform it until the Day of Jesus Christ.* (u) — Moreover Jesus Christ will assuredly come again to them, according to his faithful Word : *Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you.* (w) For where he has taken Possession, he will never quit his Claim : His People are his own Inheritance, and he will return to his Habitation. And whatever Soul is directed into his Love, shall be brought into the complete Enjoyment thereof with himself ; nor shall all the Power of the Enemy ever be able to divide one of his Lambs from his Bosom : *In all these Things we are more than Conquerors, through him that loved us.* (x) And he hath promised, *To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my Throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his Throne.* (y) Therefore he speaks Comfort to his Children, in the Midst of the Distresses and Commotions which shall be in the World ; *When these Things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your Heads ; for your Redemption draweth nigh.* (z)

(t) II. Thess. i. 11. (u) Phill. i. 6. (w) John xiv. 28.
 (x) Rom. viii. 37. (y) Rev. iii. 21. (z) Luk. xxi. 28.

3. To those who enjoy the Love of God, hence arises the strongest of all Obligations to live to his Glory. The Love of God, manifest in his merciful Kindness, and rich Goodness to his People; is the most powerful Motive to Gratitude, Obedience, Holiness of Life, and Purity of Conversation. And from hence these Duties are strongly enforced throughout the whole Scripture: *That they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good Works. (a)* — *And, let every one that nameth the Name of Christ, depart from Iniquity. (b)* — *He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. — And every Man that hath this Hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure. (c)* This is the Argument which the Apostle uses with the *Epheſians*: Having filled three Chapters in opening the Wonders of Grace, and magnifying the unfearchable Myſteries of divine Love, from thence he forms this Exhortation; *I therefore the Priſoner of the Lord, beſeech you that ye walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith ye are called. (d)* All other Motives, ſuch as the Terrors of Conſcience, Fears of Death, Judgment, and Hell, or Hopes of future Rewards, &c. ſpring from a dying Root, and can only bring forth Fruit unto Death; they cannot produce a pure Heart, nor a ſpiritual Mind, and ſo long as the Tree remains corrupt, ſuch will the Fruit be. But where the Love of God is, there is a ſpiritual

(a) Tit. iii. 8. (b) II. Tim. ii. 19. (c) I. Joh. ii. 6. iii. 3. (d) Eph. iv. 1.

Conformity to the Son of God, for Christ dwells in the Heart : *And if Christ be in you, the Body is dead because of Sin ; but the Spirit is Life, because of Righteousness.* (e) And here the Lord lays the Foundation of all genuine Obedience : *If ye love me, keep my Commandments.* (f)

4. To the dear Friends and Relatives of the Deceased, it is Matter of Satisfaction and Composure ; *That ye sorrow not, even as others which have no Hope. For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.* (g) We have no Reason to doubt, but strong Ground to conclude, that our dear Brother now sleeps in Jesus : And hence, all of us who are found in the same State, may expect to meet him again with Joy, when Jesus comes. Therefore we have no Cause of Sorrow on his Behalf, only so far as the Loss may affect ourselves, in being deprived of his Conversation and Usefulness. He is taken away from us, we shall behold his Face no more in this earthly Mansion : Under which Consideration, I cannot but mourn ; yet I cannot but rejoice, in Consideration of the Stability and strong Consolation with which the Lord was pleased to bless him, as a Preparative to his entering into the Joy of his Lord.—And now may we compose our Minds into humble Joy, and solace ourselves in the Testimony of the Spirit ; which, without Arrogancy, we may apply to the Case of our departed Friend : *Write,*

(e) Rom. viii. 10. (f) Joh. xiv. 15. (g) I. Thess. iv. 13, 14.

Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit (b) And may the Tears of Sorrow, which are naturally drawn forth by the present disconsolatory Providence, as it relates to ourselves, revolve into Extacies of spiritual Joy, in looking forward to the triumphant Appearing of our Lord: When Christ who is our Life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in Glory. (i)—For we know, that if our earthly House of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a Building of God, an House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens. (k)

(b) Rev. xiv. 13. (i) Col. iii. 4. (k) II. Cor. v. 1.



F I N I S.



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